

BEGINNING TEACHERS' ATTRITION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KAZAKHSTAN

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Introduction. This study analyzed beginning teachers' drop-out in secondary schools in Kazakhstan. As Heller (2004) reported, 29 percent of beginning teachers leave schools within first three years, and 39 percent of them drop out by the end of five years in the USA. Studies addressing these issues in Kazakhstan do not exist or present and need to be conducted in order to find out the reasons for beginning teachers' attrition in Kazakhstan, to examine the topic more thoroughly, to analyze beginning teachers' challenges and give implications for Kazakhstani policy makers. This study is one attempt to address the new teachers' drop out problem in our schools, which should be of high concern.

Purpose and research questions. The purpose of the study was to explore the beginning teachers' experiences in secondary schools in Kazakhstan with a particular emphasis on the reasons for their attrition. The research questions were: (1) What challenges do beginning teachers face while working in secondary schools which cause their attrition? (2) What makes beginning teachers' drop out from secondary schools in Kazakhstan in the first few years? (3) What factors could help beginning teachers to overcome challenges?

Materials and methods. A qualitative method was used to conduct this study. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The sample included five beginning teachers and one principal in one secondary school in Semey, Kazakhstan.

Results and discussion. The following categories were found from the data. (1) *Challenges* were identified as adaptation to school, load of paper work, working with students, communicating with parents, and teachers' workload. (2) *Environmental factors* influencing beginning teachers' attrition were low salary, the status of teacher's job, administration, and more opportunities in big cities rather than in small towns. (3) *Important factors* in overcoming challenges were good conditions for professional development, participating in events and competitions, getting effective support from administration, and mentors' help.

Conclusions. In conclusion, the findings obtained from data collection helped to reach the aim of the study and provided answers for research questions. The aim was to get deeper understanding of beginning teachers' experiences, challenges and reasons of their attrition.

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References.

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